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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANTANANARIVO 000812

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/EPS AND AF/E - MBEYZEROV
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ETRD](#) [MA](#)
SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: LOBBYING FOR THE CABINET

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF DOVIE HOLLAND FOR
REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

11. (C) Summary: The announcement of the full transition cabinet for the new power-sharing Government of Madagascar has been delayed by continuing disagreements over the allocation of several ministerial posts. The local International Contact Group (ICG) issued a communique urging prompt action Nov 23, and key ambassadors demarched the president, co-presidents, and prime minister Nov 24 to deliver the same message, noting the danger of losing AGOA and EU benefits if action is not taken soon. The AU/UN/SADC mediation team has broken down, and it appears that future intervention by any member of the team other than possibly President Chissano himself would not be productive. Members of the Rajoelina and Ravalomanana movements have actively lobbied the Ambassador this week to support them in the cabinet negotiations; the Ambassador explained to them all that the international community does not care how they divide the seats amongst themselves as long as they agree and they do it now, to avoid the disasters that will befall the Malagasy economy and people if they fail in their mission. End summary.

12. (C) The leaders of the power-sharing transition government failed to announce the members of the new cabinet by their self-imposed deadline of Nov 21 and remain deadlocked over the question of which political tendency will control which ministries. The local international contact group, upon the instigation of the US Embassy, issued a communique, published widely by local media Nov 23, expressing its concern about the delay. The text of the communique follows:

The local International Contact Group on Madagascar is very concerned about continuing delays in forming an inclusive, consensual transition government. In accordance with the Maputo Charter, the timely formation of this government remains a key next step toward resolving Madagascar's political impasse. Further delays in this fundamental first step will only postpone the establishment of other important transition institutions and further delay elections, national reconciliation, and international re-engagement with Madagascar.

13. (C) The Ambassadors of the U.S., France, Germany (representing the Swedish EU Presidency), and South Africa met with President Rajoelina, Co-Presidents Andrianirina and Rakotovahiny, and PM Mangalaza Nov 24 for two hours to

implore them to organize their government within the coming hours or days. Ambassador Marquardt told them that only results will enable the international community to take Madagascar's leaders seriously. His colleagues reinforced that message by mentioning EU and AU deadlines that are soon coming due, particularly the EU's decision on 630 million Euros worth of frozen aid programs. The Ambassadors pressed for the cabinet to be installed, the electoral commission and other transition institutions to be put in place thereafter, and an elections timetable to be formulated as soon as feasible.

14. (C) The Ambassadors urged the quartet to fully take on their new responsibilities for the good of the country, rather than act on behalf of their political movements, and to behave as statesmen in making the necessary tough decisions. Co-President Andrianirina had said in a televised statement Nov 21 that another summit of the four movement chiefs (Ravalomanana, Ratsiraka, Rajoelina, and Zafy) would be held this week to determine the division of ministerial posts. Ratsiraka had subsequently called for this meeting to take place via televised addresses to the Malagasy public; Ratsiraka pleaded for the other three chiefs to come to Paris to iron out their differences by the end of November, "as AGOA would be cut Dec 4" if they did not. The U.S. and French Ambassadors urged the quartet to solve this issue here and now amongst themselves now, rather than delaying resolution further through another chiefs summit abroad. The French Ambassador did note France's willingness to facilitate such a summit if the chiefs requested it, but also openly questioned both its utility and the dubious political message a meeting in Paris would send at this time. The quartet

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seemed amenable to dropping the summit idea in favor of resolving the cabinet issue here. Prime Minister Mangalaza proposed attaching all controversial ministries to his office, which Rajoelina rejected before the ambassadors took their leave and left the quartet to complete their work.

15. (C) Another reason for opposing a fourth summit is the sorry state of the mediation team. Acting mainly out of apparent institutional jealousy, AU Chairman Jean Ping wrote the UN's Ban Ki-Moon last week stating that "the mediation is over", which Ban Ki-Moon reportedly protested in a return phone call to Ping. The AU continues to seek to discredit UN Mediator Drame personally (particularly unfair and unfortunate as it is primarily Drame's efforts -- closely coordinated with Chissano -- that have driven the process so far); Drame has withdrawn at least temporarily, pending clarity on his role. Chissano has engaged with the four chiefs by telephone this week, but his future involvement is uncertain, particularly given the AU's lack of support. A follow-on mission of AU and UN envoys due to arrive this week has been postponed. The Malagasy politicians clearly see the divisions within the mediation team, thus it is uncertain if future intervention by anyone other than Chissano would be productive.

16. (C) Hard-liners within Rajoelina's movement, as well as current members of cabinet, have threatened to take to the streets and/or go on strike if he continues to compromise. Several more moderate members of the divided Rajoelina movement told the Ambassador Nov 24 that they propose that each of the four movements submit their allotted six names to the prime minister, who would then, in coordination with the president, assign them according to their qualifications to particular ministries. The Ambassador explained that the international community did not care how the seats were divided, as long as the Malagasy agreed, but pointed out that agreement had been previously reached by the four movements on all of the key ministries, so the movements should start from there, rather than zero, to apportion the rest. He stressed the point that action was urgently needed now for the good of the country, as well as retaining AGOA and EU benefits. He also implored them to give Rajoelina the

support he needs within his own movement to make further concessions.

¶7. (C) Ravalomanana supporters have relaunched their previously daily meetings at the burned-out Magro store parking lot and pledge to continue them until all political prisoners are released and Ravalomanana returns to Madagascar. One of three remaining high-profile political prisoners was granted temporary release Nov 20, pending trial in early December, but a second was denied bail Nov 23. Several members of Ravalomanana's movement told Emboffs that the installation of the cabinet was blocked because Rajoelina was now claiming all of the ministries that would be key for running the transition and a presidential campaign. Emboffs reiterated the points mentioned above made by the Ambassador.

¶8. (C) Comment: If the transition leaders can succeed in putting a cabinet in place, the other steps leading up to and including presidential elections should ultimately be taken, but continued prodding from the international community will be necessary. Each step will no doubt be a struggle, but struggling forward slowly is the best of bad options. Post will continue to encourage the president, co-presidents, and PM to fully adopt their new roles as leaders of the nation, including making necessary difficult decisions, rather than acting as proxies for their movement chiefs. Transition President Rajoelina unfortunately continues to evince the inability to make or stick to those decisions, or to control his divided movement. End comment.

MARQUARDT